

to the Republican leaders yesterday and said that I would work with them on their tax relief package. But we should not be under any illusion here. There is a huge difference. Our plan benefits the people who need the drugs. Their plan benefits the people who make the drugs, who are afraid if we buy all these drugs in bulk, we might get a decent price for the seniors.

Now, I'm not against America's pharmaceutical companies. They do a great job in developing drugs. And I'm not even against our paying some sort of a premium to do that. But I am against any effort that's trying to keep our seniors from getting these prescription drugs. And if we were in the majority, this deal would have been done 4 months ago.

If we were in the majority, we wouldn't be debating here about whether we should close the gun show loophole. The people that are against it are saying it won't do any good. They used to tell me in '93 that the Brady bill wouldn't do any good, because all those people were buying their guns at gun shows. [Laughter]

If they were in the majority, we wouldn't be debating whether we were going to have smaller classes or whether we were going to modernize our schools or what we were going to do to make the most of this moment.

Now, they can make their case. I'm not saying anything bad about them. I'm sick and tired of all that. But there are differences. And don't you be fooled. And the whole country is looking at this, because here's this fellow who is a State senator, so he represents more people in California—a State senator represents more people than a Member of the House of Representatives. He's got a perfectly nice life, and he's putting his neck on the line to try to represent us. And we ought to help him. We ought to help him because of his background, because of his experience, because of his vision, but mostly because America needs to make a clear-headed choice here.

All I want—I've found that the American people nearly always get it right, if you give them enough time and enough information. Otherwise, we wouldn't be around here after over 200 years. They nearly always get it right. Sometimes it takes us longer than we

should. You mentioned Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln—Abraham Lincoln, when he was running the first time, had to promise not to free the slaves. Aren't we glad he didn't keep that campaign commitment? [Laughter] But finally, the people caught up to where they needed to be, and he just kept leading us on and leading us on.

Now, we know what the issues are, and we know where the people are. I'm convinced if the voters of his district know Adam Schiff—if they know where he stands, if they know the honest differences between him and his opponent—this race will be victorious. And I'm convinced that will happen in two dozen other places across America where we have seats in play.

So I want you to think about that. The problem with all these fundraisers is, you're always preaching to the saved. [Laughter] But when you leave here, you will, between now and election day, be talking to people all over America, including a lot of people in California.

And it's important that you not just come to these fundraisers; it's important that you take every single opportunity you have between now and November to tell people that. We have the chance of a lifetime. We have great opportunities. There are real and honest differences. We don't have to have a negative election. We can have a positive election that's an honest debate. But we can't get there by pretending that there aren't differences when there are. On every difference that makes a difference, Adam is on the right side, and we've got to send him to Congress.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:20 p.m. at the Frederick Douglass Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Schiff's wife, Eve; and Tom Umberg, committee member, California Delegation to the Democratic National Convention 2000. Adam Schiff is a candidate for California's 27th Congressional District.

Remarks at a "Salute to Bruce Vento"

June 27, 2000

Thank you very much. I've got my "Vento" button and my "Hillary" pin. [Laughter] And

Bruce says that “Vento” means “win” in Italian, and I think they’re both winners, so I like this.

First of all, I want to thank Gerry Sikorski and Vin Weber for cochairing this event. I understand there is a slew of Members of Congress here today, so I won’t attempt to call all their names, but I thank them for being here. And I know Bruce’s sons are here. And I think Garrison Keillor is coming, and he’ll be better than me—[*laughter*—so that will be worth waiting for.

I also want to recognize our great Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt, who is celebrating his birthday tonight with Bruce Vento. Thank you. I like to ride Bruce about his birthday because he’s older than I am and looks younger, and I resent it. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank all of you for coming here to pay tribute to Bruce tonight and to support the Bruce Vento Science Educator Scholarship Fund. I think it’s quite an appropriate time to be doing this, just a day after we announced the sequencing of the human genome. On the way in, Bruce was saying, “You know, that was a really exciting announcement you had yesterday. Now we’ve got to find a few more science teachers to explain to people what it means.” [*Laughter*] I thought that was pretty great.

He has been a scientist and an environmentalist since his boyhood in Minnesota. And I reminded him today that one of my most memorable times as President has been the time I spent with him in Minnesota and with a number of others of you here from the Minnesota congressional delegation, as well.

Since 1977, he’s been an advocate for science and the environment in the Congress. Some of this will be said later, but I think it’s worth—this is astonishing, and maybe even some of you don’t know this—he has steered into law more than 300 bills to protect our natural resources. He has led in the preservation of hundreds of thousands of acres of wilderness from Minnesota’s boundary waters to Alaska to American Samoa.

That would have been record enough, but the thing I like even more is that Bruce Vento cares about people, especially people without a voice, the homeless. He’s also been

a leader for health care and education. And if there is anybody who has ever listened to him perform at any of these hearings, he has never stopped being a teacher. Time and time again he’s reached out to bridge the gap between researchers and lay people, to help the rest of us understand both the majesty and the frailty of the natural world we inhabit.

And tonight, as he fights a disease which has not yet yielded all its secrets to science, he’s our teacher again. He has certainly shown us a lot about courage, and we’re very grateful for it.

Bruce has become a real friend to me over these last 7½ years. He’s been an honest and trusted adviser, and he’s always said exactly what he thought. And as a consequence, I have also been his student, and I have learned a great deal.

Bruce, Hillary and I admire you. We love you, and we’re grateful. You’ve made me think this being term limited is not all bad. But let me say to all of you, I think the best thing I could say about Bruce Vento is the now very famous thing Henry Adams said nearly a century ago: “A teacher affects humanity. You can never tell where his influence stops.” Bruce, your influence will never stop.

Thank you all, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:05 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Washington Court Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gerald E. Sikorski and John V. (Vin) Weber, salute cohosts; and Garrison Keillor, host of “Prairie Home Companion.”

The President’s News Conference

June 28, 2000

The President. Good afternoon. This has been a good week for the American people: first, the landmark breakthrough in human genomic research, which promises to eradicate once incurable diseases and revolutionize health care for a very long time to come; second, the release of the midsession review, which told us that the health of our economy continues its remarkable expansion.

Our budget surplus this year will be the largest in history, \$211 billion. Over the next 10 years, after we lock away Medicare and